

## Mini-Macaw Readers' Stories Chapter One

### Bird owners share thier experience living with a mini-macaw

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Noble macaw

Alfie Poopalotta Mitchell  
Courtesy Gina Mitchell, South Carolina

My mini-macaw's name is Alfie Poopalotta Mitchell. He will be 2 years old on May 19. Born to parents that really didn't want to be parents! My friend owns the parents and had to pull Alfie very early as his mom and dad were biting him. They bit the ends of all of his toes off. He has only small nubs. The veterinarian thought he may not survive and thought he should be euthanized. We hand-fed and loved him. He is my best bird buddy. He can climb, talk, sing and has learned to hold his food in his little nubs. He still doesn't fly, but he hasn't given up. He's very sweet and loves me so much! He says, "Goodnight Mommy" and is so excited to see me every morning.

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Severe macaw

Chester  
Courtesy Sara Beth Dirham, Ohio

Chester is a severe macaw. He came to live with me late last July. One funny thing he does is grab my shirt, right under my arm and shake it, saying, "Tickle, tickle!" When he first learned to say my name, he realized that it was a real attention-getter. He uses it every chance he gets, "Sar, I love you," "Sar, you're bad" (when I am not fast enough with his favorite food), and "Sar, would you like a shower?" Living with a severe macaw is an adventure every day. He is funny, loving, playful, headstrong and simply a joy to me.

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Hahn's macaw

Cleo  
Courtesy Ruth Hansen, Wisconsin

Hi! My name is Cleo. I'm a 6-year-old Hahn's mini-macaw. I have a pet human that works at home as a potter and as a weaver most of the time. I get to go over to the clay studio and hang out and help with the clay, but she won't let me help with the weaving! What's up with that?

Other than my own human, there is a male human and a dog that live with me. Both of them are fun to terrorize. There are also two budgies that fly around (how do they do that?), but I try to ignore them. I would definitely bite them if I could, but they are too fast.

I'm not afraid of anything, being the big bird of the house. My two most favorite things to do are: 1) help with dinner preparations and 2) run back and forth on the shower curtain rod while my human takes a shower. We both scream and sing for the latter activity.

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Hahn's macaw

Gizmo  
Courtesy Sandra Miller, Florida

I am so happy to share my story about my mini-macaw, Gizmo, because he really is a big bird in a little bird's body. After owning a blue-and-gold maacw for a year we decided to take on another bird. I wanted a bird with a similar personality, friendly, playful and socially interactive but without the size, as space was limited. When we first saw Gizmo he was very shy and, when we would hold him, he would crawl up under our hair and hide. He was quite timid for sometime and I was concerned that maybe he didn't bond with us as well as we thought he might have.

As he grew more comfortable with us he became much more friendly. One day, while doing some trick training with our blue & gold, someone decided to get into the act.

When we said, "Wings up" Gizmo put his wings up, too, and gave out a little "Eek eek." We praised and said, "Good job" and gave him a nut for his efforts. In fact, now he tells the other birds (or us) "Wings up" then praises us by saying "Good job."

We bought Gizmo a toy whiffle ball with paper and wood. It did not take long for his busy little beak to destroy it leaving just the bare ball on a chain. I put it on top where his playgym was, intending to replace it with a new toy. This ball has become his best friend. He chills out behind it and scratches his head. Then, in an instant, he is charging it wildly. It spins around and he butts it again and says, "Put em up" or sometimes he yells "Stop it" to the ball as well. Anything that is done with big brother must also be done with Gizmo because he wants to show that he is just as cool as a big macaw.

I think that Gizmo may be a hormonal these days as he is a bit nipper and a little more cage territorial, so we just observe his body language and try to respect his stage. He is just a delight and his intelligence always amazes me.  
[Click image to enlarge](#)

Severe macaw

Sasha  
Courtesy Susan Salas, Washington

The room was loud and full of cages sheltering surrendered or rescued birds all calling out as if to say, "Look at me! I'm so pretty! Take me!" But we only saw the cage in the corner; hiding inside was the very fellow we had come to see. We approached. My husband looked at him, he looked at my husband, and they were both lost.

That's how we met Sasha, our 18-year-old severe macaw, we adopted last June. It took us two trips – 300 miles each way. The first was to visit him in his temporary home and gauge compatibility and to be evaluated as adopters. The second was to pick him up (after passing the home inspection).

We were warned that he was "scarlet-macaw-loud" and had cage aggression issues. But with us, he was docile and cuddly, imitating coughs, calling for a nonexistent cat, barking like a dog and generally behaving like a honeymooning newlywed, with my husband as his groom. We were smug about his perfect behavior. Foolish us. The honeymoon ended as soon as Sasha realized he was staying, that we were wrapped around his scaly toe, and now, he could do anything he wanted. My beloved Pionus, Cyril, is almost pathologically unobtrusive. Not Sasha; brash, vocal, acrobatic Sasha, the funniest, smartest, most demanding, most beautiful 2 year old – I mean macaw – on earth. Toes beware.

He is still desperately in love with my husband and welcomes him home with a hearty "Come here! Come here!" every night and bids him "Goodbye!" every morning.

Despite our slightly pathetic love of Sasha and our happiness over adding him to our family, I have been forbidden to look at Petfinder.com again. Sasha has taken the final bird spot in our hearts. The other birds agree. [Click image to enlarge](#)

Severe macaw

Jazperette (Jazi)  
Courtesy Sharon Blake, Washington

A little over a year ago my mother, Myrtle Rieman, also affectionately known as Granny, came to live with us in Washington. Granny, who is 92-years-young, had always told me that parrots are fine – for me. Wild birds were more her cup of tea, she insisted. As you can see, Granny's thoughts on parrots have changed dramatically. She and Jazi are inseparable. And every evening Jazi sits atop Granny's head while we all gather in the living room to watch TV.

I have had parrots since 1997. I'd been looking at severe macaws for awhile before we finally adopted Jazi. She was just 4 months old, and feeding time provided extra special bonding opportunities for Jazi and Granny. I would give Jazi her formula, and then Granny would hold her. Jazi seemed to know that Granny needed her. And the feeling was clearly mutual. Jazi would sit and snuggle with Granny for hours.

Each night Granny and Jazi share a special ritual. Jazi comes in, squawks for her portion of fruit juice and then is ready for

her nips of Jello and fruit. Then Jazi sits with Granny while my mom strokes her soft underwing feathers. All the while, this loving, gentle little parrot makes the sweetest chirpy noises.

We are so glad Jazi came to live with us and become Granny's special friend.

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yellow-collared macaw

Oliver  
Courtesy Stephanie Brown, Ontario, Canada

In October 2007 I went to visit a family friend who was a parrot breeder on a farm. I wasn't planning on going home with another bird that day – after all I already had six of them, but there was something about this bird that caught my eye. The breeder had many pairs of birds in cages, but this one was all by himself, free-flighted in an old barn, looking very lonely and in need of a good bath. I have always wanted a mini-macaw and I decided that I could give him a loving home. I discovered that he had been abused and went to four different homes in his six years of life. He hadn't had any human contact in a few years. I really didn't know what I was getting into, but I had a good feeling about this one. I just had to have him in my life.

The breeder trimmed his wing feathers so I could hold him. The second he stepped onto my hand it was love at first sight. He climbed right up onto my shoulder and started kissing and snuggling up to my face, which is when I finally knew he wanted to go home with me. After scrambling to get the money to purchase him on my student budget, I finally took him home. I am now the proud owner of a yellow-collared macaw that I named Oliver. It took a while for him to become adjusted to his new home, he is still learning to play with toys, and he just recently said his first word, which was, "Kiss." My life would not be the same if it weren't for Oliver.

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yellow-collared macaw

Sophie  
Courtesy Sara Walfoort, Pennsylvania

I have a very sweet yellow-collared macaw, a mini-macaw, sharing my home with me. Sophie is 16 years old and has been living with me for 10 years. What are my favorite things about Sophie? More than any other bird or animal I know, Sophie is completely tied into my emotions. She's a complete empath. She knows when I am happy, and she knows when I am sad. If I look worried, she'll often call out, "Mama" or "I love you" just to let me know she is in my corner. She is not much of a talker, but she can accurately mimic both my cry and my laughter. Fortunately, they don't sound all that dissimilar from one another, so often when I am crying she'll start, too. That immediately makes me laugh, which makes her laugh. It's a sure way to brighten the darkest moments.

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yellow-collared macaw

Marley  
Courtesy Deborah Kirkbride, Michigan

Living With A Yellow-Collared Mini Macaw

So you're thinking you want a big macaw but you don't have the room? Wow, are you missing out. Have you checked out the yellow-collared mini-macaw or one of the other mini-macaws? Living with Marley, my yellow-collared mini-macaw, has been a blast. They are such sweet birds and have all the personality of the bigger macaws. They can be every bit as loud when they want to be, they have the capability of talking, they are funny, they play, they cuddle, they love to be petted, what more could one ask for from this bird?

They are much easier to hold than the bigger macaw, look just like a big macaw, take up less space, but I believe give them all the room you can.

Marley spends half his time hanging upside down attacking toys and destroying them. He can be very loud when it is time for dinner, or when he can hear me and can't see me, or when he finds a toy that he loves to attack. The volume doesn't bother me, as it is a low tone. I find it less annoying than the squeal of one of my cockatiels that has developed a very

high pitch.

I think the mini-macaw is the most overlooked bird there is. He does not have the biggest vocabulary, but when he talks he is the funniest guy you ever met. He loves to play peek-a-boo, and when I come home from work I always get a "Hi," no matter what time of day it is. If he really wants me, he will yell, "Come here, come on!"

Marley is just 1 1/2 years old. As he gets older I find that, as with any birds, he has developed issues that needed to be dealt with. Marley's favorite thing in the evening is to grab my finger and place it in his beak. Then I take my thumb and rub the top of his beak. While I am doing this, he keeps telling me he is a "Good boy." Lately I noticed he grips harder than I would prefer, so we learned the word "Gentle." Now when he is getting his beak rub and I say, "Marley," he says, "Gentle" and backs off from the grip. They are very smart birds.

There has been so little written on mini-macaws. Everyone wants to write about the big guy and put one paragraph in the back of the books about the minis. I can't believe more people haven't learned of this great bird species. I so wish someone would write a book on the mini-macaw and give us more information such as what is considered proper diet and if they need special things in their diet like the bigger macaws do. My hopes is someone will read this article and write something more on the mini-macaw.

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